

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please insert the following paragraph at the beginning of the specification.

This application is a 371 of international application PCT/JP2003/013847, which claims priority based on Japanese patent application No. 2002-319169 filed October 31, 2002, which is incorporated herein by reference.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 9, line 4, with the following rewritten paragraph:

The biodegradable nonwoven fabric used in the present invention is any of various nonwoven fabrics which have been known in the art and those described in ~~Patent Document 1 or 2~~ the prior art described above are exemplified. As will be described hereinafter, a nonwoven fabric including a laminated product structure in which first and second layers each having a plurality of biodegradable threads arranged in parallel are piled on one another is more preferably used.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 15, line 10, with the following rewritten paragraph:

In the above cases, a nonwoven fabric can be fabricated by bonding the threads of the layers adjacent to each other at contact portions. For instance, when biodegradable threads used are threads prepared by a wet spinning method described later, which are not dried (in wet condition), they can be bonded by subjecting them to a drying process after lamination. In case of the biodegradable threads which were subjected to drying, crosslinking treatment and so forth after spinning, adhesion can be carried out such that a biodegradable material, e.g., a biodegradable polymer, is applied on a nonwoven fabric by spraying or impregnation after lamination and is then dried.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 16, line 4, with the following rewritten paragraph:

For instance, such threads include collagen threads prepared by spinning solubilized collagen provided as a spinning stock solution. Spinning a solubilized collagen solution as a spinning stock solution means that the collagen solution is used as a raw material and spun by any of various spinning methods known in the art such as a wet-type spinning method (see, for example, ~~Patent Documents 3 to 5 above,~~ the prior art described above and JP 6-228505 A, and JP 6-228506 A).

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 17, line 5, with the following rewritten paragraph:

The concentration of collagen in the collagen solution is not particularly limited as far as it allows spinning, but preferably is in the range of about 4 to 10% by weight, more preferably about 5 to 7% by weight.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 17, line 12, with the following rewritten paragraph:

In a case where the collagen thread is spun by a wet spinning method, a collagen thread used for a nonwoven fabric may be one in a wet condition prepared by the wet spinning method, which is not subjected to drying, or may be one obtained by subjecting the article to drying, a crosslinking treatment and so forth after spinning.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 24, line 16, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Also, a nonwoven fabric can be used, which is prepared by use of a biodegradable thread obtained from a biodegradable material such as gelatin, in addition to collagen, and the nonwoven fabric can be used, which is prepared by use of a biodegradable thread

article obtained from a synthetic material as described above. These nonwoven fabrics can be produced by the known methods, for example, a method described in ~~Patent Document 6~~ the prior art identified above as an example of the methods using gelatin.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 31, line 8, with the following rewritten paragraph:

The prosthetic material for tissue regeneration of the present invention includes the biodegradable substrate (stitched product) obtained as described above. In other words, the biodegradable substrate can be used as a prosthetic material for tissue regeneration (substrate for transplantation), which is transplanted into the living body as filling and prosthetic materials for tissue regeneration, for example, in the field of tissue engineering and regenerative medicine. That is, the biodegradable substrate of the present invention is provided to fill a tissue-defective portion in the living body or on the surface of the body to facilitate the regeneration of the lost biological tissue. Specifically, for example, it can be directly applied as a filmy material for the pericardium, pleura, cerebral dura mater, chorion, and the like to a membrane site removed by a surgical operation. The biodegradable substrate gradually decomposes and is absorbed as the filmy

material covering the biological tissue regenerates. Also, as a prosthetic material, it may fill a hole after the extraction of a tooth or a hole opened in dental bone to seal the hole until the regeneration of gingival tissue or dental bone. It may be processed into a tubular article such as an artificial blood vessel, a stent, an artificial nerve channel, an artificial trachea, an artificial esophagus, or an artificial ureter, or bag-like articles to be embedded in the living body. As a method of preparing the tubular article, there may be mentioned a method by which the biodegradable substrate obtained is wound around a tube or the like made of polyfluoroethylene fibers using a collagen solution as adhesives, and is dried, followed by pulling the tube out.